

Claremont 2769I Public Information Meeting Minutes



Date: November 16, 2021
Location: Claremont Community Center
Time: 6:30 PM
Minutes By: Evan Lowell, Teresa Sandell

I. ATTENDEES

See attached Sign-In sheet for list of attendees from the community. The table below contains names and contact information of attendees from NHDOT and TranSystems (design consultant).

<u>NAME</u>	<u>EMAIL</u>
David Scott	David.Scott@dot.nh.gov
Jason Tremblay	Jason.A.Tremblay@dot.nh.gov
Anthony Weatherbee	Anthony.Weatherbee@dot.nh.gov
Teresa Sandell	tksandell@transystems.com
Evan Lowell	eclowell@transystems.com

II. INTRODUCTIONS

- David Scott opened the meeting, welcoming those present both in-person and viewing via local cable access television. David introduced the NHDOT and TranSystems staff present. David encouraged those attending to participate, ask questions and provide input.
- David provided the website address where the presentation can be viewed.
- David asked all present to record their attendance on the sign in sheet.
- David read the *Public Information Meeting Statement* for this project, which is attached.

III. PRESENTATION

- Tony Weatherbee provided an overview of the project area, stated the project purpose (rehabilitate the existing bridge and remove it from the State Red List), described the existing bridge condition deficiencies, and stated the planned rehabilitation work items.
- Tony described the traffic alternatives considered for this construction:
 - Phased construction with alternating one-way traffic;
 - Full bridge closure with detours for northbound and southbound traffic;
 - Partial bridge closure, maintain one lane of traffic in one direction and detour traffic for the other direction.

He stated that the DOT has met with the City of Claremont Traffic Advisory Committee and also with other City officials, and both groups preferred alternative "i". Tony then described additional details of how traffic operations at the nearby signalized intersection will be revised for this alternative.

He also described alternatives ii and iii. Each of these alternatives will increase traffic thru the downtown area, which is seen as detrimental.

- Tony provided an overview of the current construction schedule, stating it is anticipated construction will take two construction seasons, with the bridge open to two lanes of traffic during the winter between these construction seasons.

IV. QUESTIONS AND DISCUSSION

The following questions were asked and discussed:

- a. What is meant by “two construction seasons”? Is that the duration of the entire project (from now), or is it the duration of construction?
This is the time period for construction, the amount of time traffic will be impacted. Construction is not anticipated to begin until late in 2023, and be completed by 2025.
- b. When is the Wetland Assessment expected to be complete?
This takes 180 days to be reviewed/approved. Work on preparing this permit is already underway.
- c. How many months is a construction season?
A construction season is 7-8 months (Spring – Fall).
- d. How is this project being funded?
The project is being funded by the State gas tax.
- e. What are the likely traffic backups at the intersection during construction?
Tony asked Teresa Sandell of TranSystems to answer this question. Teresa described the anticipated traffic operations during construction (with the temporary dedicated turn lanes on Route 12/103). It is anticipated that traffic backups will not be longer than 1 minute.
- f. For cars travelling south on Jarvis Hill Road into the intersection to cross the bridge, how will that move remain safe when the bridge is one lane?
Teresa stated that the NB and SB traffic on Jarvis Hill Road will be on different signal phases, not on the same signal phase (as it is today). This will allow the single lane over the bridge to be cleared of all traffic before traffic in the opposing direction is permitted to cross the bridge. She emphasized that the signing and signal timing will be very explicit in an effort to avoid traffic travelling in both directions at the same time on the one lane bridge.
- g. Will the intersection or approaches change as a result of this project?
There will be no changes to Jarvis Hill Road north of the bridge and north of the intersection; some cable-guide rail will be added to Jarvis Hill Road south of the bridge. The shoulders will be strengthened and paved on Route 12/103.
- h. Wide farm vehicles frequently use the bridge during the summer months. How will they be accommodated?
Due to the one-lane width of the bridge during construction, wide loads will likely need to be detoured. One alternate for the reconstructed bridge will add 2'-4" of width to the bridge deck.
- i. Is a bike lane being added?
One alternate for the reconstructed bridge will add 2'-4" of width to the bridge deck, but striping for a dedicated bike lane is not anticipated.
- j. Was using a temporary bridge considered?
A temporary bridge was evaluated, but is not recommended due to the additional cost and environmental impacts.
- k. Is Half-Mile Road being considered for a detour route?
This road cannot be signed as a detour route as it is not a state-owned roadway, however it is understood that people familiar with the local area may elect to use this road. There is also a low vertical clearance (under the railroad bridge) that would preclude this from being a formal detour.
- l. Has roadway lighting been considered for the intersection?
The Department is cutting back on roadway lighting, and it is not currently part of this project.
- m. Will the single lane during construction be 12' wide, or even 16'?
The hope is a 12' lane can be provided during construction, but 16' will not be provided.
- n. Pre-fabricated/modular homes frequently cross the bridge, they may be impacted by this construction.

This was noted by the Department.

- o. This project is on the 10 year Plan, scheduled to begin in 2023, at a cost of \$3,392,400. Is the Department confident the bridge can be built for this amount if construction begins on time?
The scheduled start can always be impacted by permit delays, but the Department feels confident in the 2023 start date. The Department is also confident the current budget is sufficient.
- p. The area around the bridge may have historic resources. Is there any anticipation that historic/archaeological items may be detected during construction that could delay the project?
We have had an archaeological survey performed, and historic resource areas were identified. These areas have been located and will be avoided during construction.
- q. Are the existing abutments and piers adequate to remain?
Yes. Some spalled and cracked concrete will be repaired, and scour countermeasures will be installed at the piers.

V. CLOSING

David Scott closed the meeting, and provided instructions for how to find this presentation, and submit any additional questions, on the DOT website.

Public Informational Meeting Statement
Claremont, 27691
Bridge #072/127
November 16, 2021

As part of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and other state and federal regulations, the NHDOT must investigate the potential impacts that our projects will have on the surrounding natural, cultural, and social environment. Identifying key resources early in the project development process enables the Department to avoid or minimize impacts as design proceeds.

Part of our review involves identifying historic resources. In accordance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act, the Department is reviewing the project area to determine if there are historic resources within the vicinity that would be impacted by the construction of this project. Historic properties can include buildings and structures fifty years old or older, as well as archaeological sites. In addition to age, it also must be determined if a structure maintains enough integrity to be eligible for the National Register of Historic Places.

The project was reviewed by the New Hampshire Department of Historic Resources (DHR), which determined that the project area is considered archaeologically sensitive. Independent Archaeological Consulting, Inc (IAC) conducted a Phase IA/IB archaeological survey within the existing Right of Way (ROW) in October of 2018. IAC identified one area of sensitivity. A Phase II survey and determination of eligibility will be completed if ground-disturbing impacts must occur in this area.

The bridge has been documented under the post-1945 Program Comment and no further survey is required. No other historic resources are known. However, we are asking that if anyone has concerns about historical or archaeological resources in or adjacent to the project area, they bring them to our attention tonight or contact us after this meeting. Please note that Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act offers those that possess a direct interest in historical resources, including town officials and Historical Societies, an opportunity to become more involved in an advisory role during project development as “Consulting Parties.” Those interested would need to indicate so in writing to the Federal Highway Administration. Please see me after the meeting if you would like more information.

Regarding environmental resources, the bridge is located over the Sugar River, which is classified as a tier 3 stream crossing, and subject to the Shoreland Water Quality Protection Act. Permits will be needed from the NH Department of Environmental Services and the US Army Corps of Engineers. As the project proceeds, we will continue to coordinate with the appropriate agencies to avoid or minimize impacts to the Sugar River. Additionally, the project is located within the ranges of the northern long-eared bat and the federally endangered dwarf wedge mussel. A mussel survey was completed in September 2018, no mussels were located. It is not anticipated that this work will jeopardize these species. The work is not anticipated to adversely affect water or air quality, contribute to noise pollution, encounter contaminated materials or impact conservation lands.